The Portsmouth Papers

Published by Portsmouth City Council
Civic Offices
Guildhall Square
Portsmouth PO1 2AL

No. 28 February 1978
Price 50p

28

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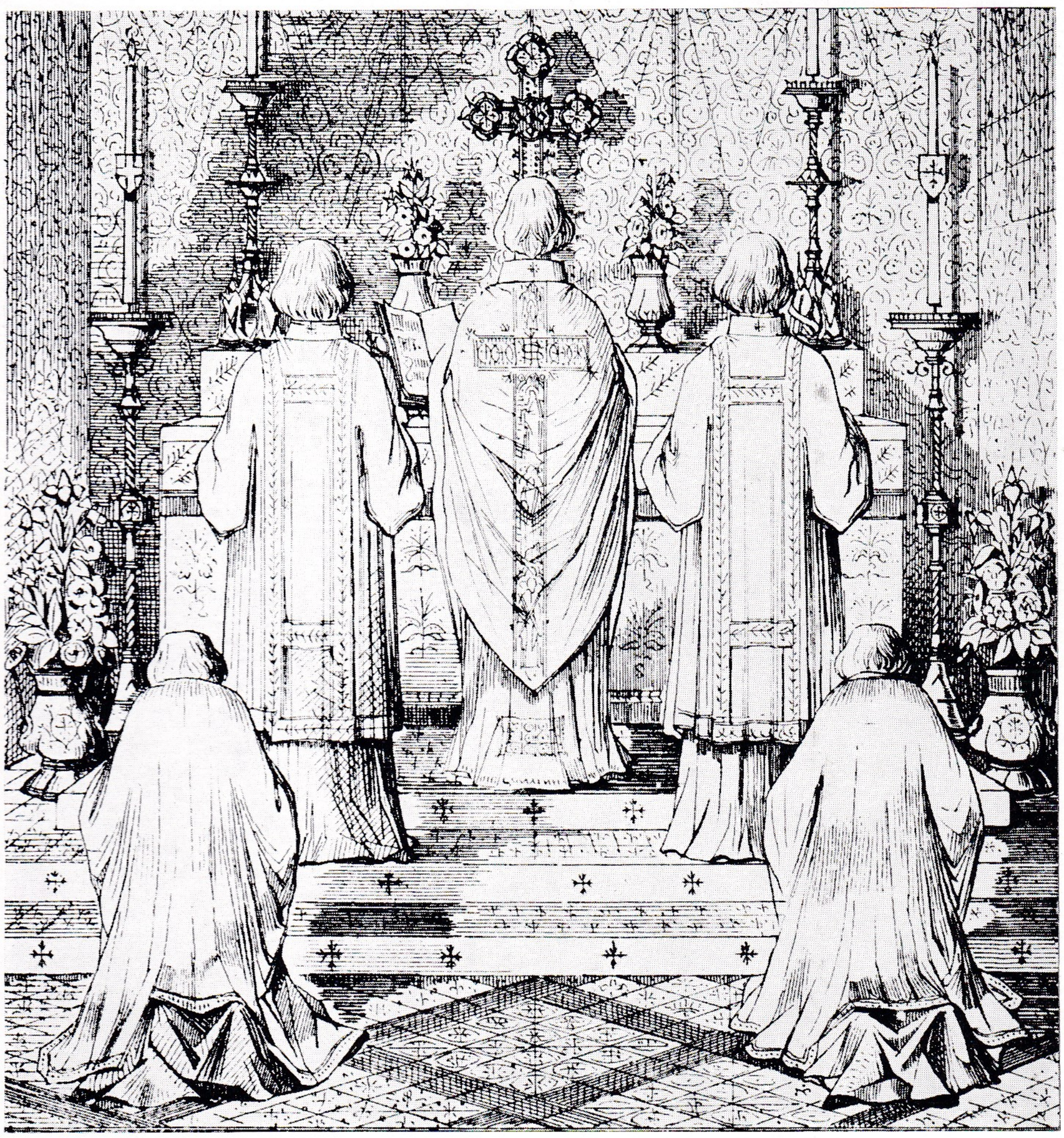

The PORTSMOUTH PAPERS *are published by Portsmouth City Council, Civic Offices, Guildhall Square, Portsmouth, PO1 2AL*

Issue No. 28 February 1978

ISBN 0 901559 36 9

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Cover:
The Holy Communion, as illustrated in the first edition of the DIRECTORIUM ANGLICANUM, *published in 1858. It illustrates 'the ascent of the Priest and Sacred Ministers to the midst of the Altar, before the celebrant takes up his position at the north-side of the Altar, and the Epistoler and Gospeller go to their respective steps, immediately before the singing of the Introit'.*

Printed by Arthur Coomer Limited, Portsmouth

RITUAL CONFLICT AT FARLINGTON AND WYMERING

Nigel Yates, MA, FRHistS

It was Bishop Cantilupe of Hereford who in 1280 placed on record in his register his dislike of 'exotics in his orchard', in his case the foreigners appointed by a Savoyard predecessor. Bishop Sumner of Winchester could well have been entertaining similar thoughts about the incumbents of Farlington and Wymering towards the end of his long tenure of that see, which lasted from 1827 until 1869. The nineteenth century was for the Church of England a period of intense reform, constant attack and rapid change. Although much of this was elsewhere particularly associated with urban areas, in the southern part of the diocese of Winchester the major urban centres of Portsmouth and Southampton were remarkably slow in responding to the religious pressures of the age. In Portsmouth there was no really successful Evangelical or Tractarian parish until the 1850s, and the mother church of St. Mary's, Portsea, was moribund until 1878. In Southampton the revolution was even longer delayed. As far as the Oxford Movement was concerned, its early parochial impact was to be felt outside the larger towns, firstly in the seaside resort of Ryde, and secondly in the villages on the northern fringes of Portsmouth.

The innovator at Ryde was Richard Waldo Sibthorp, who in 1830 purchased the recently built proprietory chapel of St. James, where he introduced a weekly communion service, early celebrations, daily services, many fully choral, and one of the first surpliced choirs in England; all these were hallmarks of the enthusiastic Tractarian. Like several of the leading early Tractarians, Sibthorp came from an Evangelical background, and he retained with his delight in ritual innovation a strongly Evangelical manner of preaching. In 1841 he was suddenly moved to secede to Rome, his being the first of a whole series of Tractarian secessions, or 'perversions' as they were termed by contemporaries, which took place during the 1840s and 1850s. His secession was received with great rapture by the future Cardinal Wiseman, though distrusted by many of his more conservative colleagues, and Sibthorp was rushed through a crash course of ordination training at Oscott so that he could become a Roman Catholic priest. By 1843 the reservations of Wiseman's colleagues seemed to be justified when Sibthorp returned to the Church of England, but he had to wait for 14 years before an equally distrustful bishop of Winchester would allow him to re-exercise his Anglican orders. Shortly afterwards Sibthorp returned to the Roman Catholic allegiance and celebrated Mass again in Cardinal Wiseman's private chapel. He died in 1879 clutching a Book of Common Prayer and was buried according to Anglican rites. After his first secession in 1841, St. James' Chapel was sold back to its Evangelical first minister, and his Tractarian supporters in Ryde had to wait until the opening of St. Michael's, Swanmore, a generation later for the satisfaction of their spiritual desires.

The religious developments that took place in the parishes of Farlington and Wymering after 1840 were superficially less dramatic than the events at Ryde, yet they were to cause a good deal of trouble over a long period with the result that they have been exceptionally well documented. Although they are paralleled in other parts of the country it would be wrong to regard them as typical; all of the three chief figures involved in the early disputes, two clerical and one lay, were highly idiosyncratic people who produced violent reactions among those they came in contact with. However, with these reservations, one can see in the events at Farlington and Wymering a microcosm of certain aspects of Anglican church life in general in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; one of the aims of this paper will be to relate local to national events and to show how the one can shed light on the other.

FARLINGTON

The parish of Farlington before 1804 stretched north from Langstone harbour to the Forest of Bere, and was remarkably narrow, both Bedhampton to the east and Cosham to the west being in different parishes. In 1804 the parishioners, anxious to avoid the financial responsibility of repairing a road across part of the Forest of Bere, omitted it from their annual perambulation of the parish boundaries. As a result, after the disafforestation of this area in 1810, it was claimed to be extra-parochial, and a new church was later erected there by public subscription which was an embarrassment to the then rector of Farlington.[1] The parish of Farlington has been connected with successive members of the Richards family, as ministers or patrons or both, since 1782 when Griffith Richards became resident curate to the non-resident rectors of both Farlington and Bedhampton. He succeeded to the rectory of Farlington in 1803, and was in turn succeeded by his son Edward Tew Richards, who acquired the patronage, and his grandson Arthur James Richards, who resigned the rectory in 1925, but whose heirs are still patrons of the living.

Map of south-east Hampshire showing the parishes of Farlington, Widley and Wymering in 1810, from an original in Portsmouth City Record Office. The parishes remained rural until well after 1900.

Edward Tew Richards was born in 1797 and was elected to a fellowship at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in 1819. In 1822 he became curate of Droxford and succeeded his father as rector of Farlington in 1826, remaining there until his death, shortly before his ninetieth birthday, in 1887.[2] His first action at Farlington was to rebuild the rectory at a cost of more than £1,100;[3] the building is still extant but is no longer used as the rectory. Richards' real ambition, however, was to improve the spiritual life of the parish. He was a personal friend of many of the early Tractarians, especially John Keble, himself beneficed in Hampshire for 30 years. It is significant that Droxford in 1845 was one of the few parishes in Hampshire where the noted ecclesiologist and Gladstone's brother-in-law, Sir Stephen Glynne, sensed the results of Tractarian teaching: 'the Holy Communion is administered monthly. Average of communicants about 50'.[4] Richards clearly wanted to achieve something similar at Farlington, but faced considerable problems. To begin with the church was in a deplorable state. Sir Stephen Glynne observed: 'this church is scarcely worthy of the smallest notice and is nearly all rebuilt in a poor style'.[5] In 1829 the chancellor of the diocese of Winchester ordered the provision of an altar book; a new bible and prayer book for the reading desk; proper coverings for the communion table, pulpit and reading desk; and new matting within the communion rails.[6] The coverings had not been provided by 1848, when Archdeacon Wigram held a visitation. The Archdeacon also noted several urgent repairs to the fabric.[7] In view of evidence to be revealed later there seems little doubt that these unfavourable reports were largely the result of the parishioners being too mean or indifferent to make proper financial provision for their parish church. Secondly the church was in a poor position in relation to the population of the parish. The church was in the extreme south-west corner of the parish, whereas the majority of the population lived on the other side of Portsdown Hill. It was, therefore, virtually inaccessible to many parishioners. This difficult situation was made more acute by the erection of a chapel in the former Forest of Bere, at what was to become Waterlooville, in 1831. In his evidence to Archdeacon Wigram at the 1848 visitation, Richards stated that many of his parishioners resorted to the new chapel because of its convenience, and, in a thinly veiled reference, because of its Evangelical character: 'there is very little Dissent in my Parish, though I fear great tendency towards it. The causes are various, but if I may presume an opinion as to the Chief Causes, I think I may mention the making light of the Apostolical Commission, and the denial of Baptismal Regeneration, with the consequent abstraction of the people from their own minister'. The evidence of the 1851 religious census seemed to confirm Richards' pessimism and annoyance. In a parish of 812 Farlington parish church could only attract congregations of about 180 in the morning and 150 in the afternoon and 40 Sunday scholars. St. George's, Waterlooville, in a district inhabited by only 195 people, had a morning congregation of about 350 and an afternoon one of about 320, though these figures included Sunday scholars.[8] Clearly, however, it was attracting an eclectic congregation.

Faced with both geographical and congregational difficulties, Richards decided to put his pastoral effort into building a new chapel-of-ease at Purbrook, near the centre of the parish, rather than rebuilding the parish church. His plans were, however, largely frustrated by the opposition of the leading laity in the parish, led by John Deverell, a newcomer, who had acquired the Purbrook estate and the lordship of the manor of Farlington in 1837 and who rebuilt Purbrook Park in 1840; the house still stands but is now a school. Richards began to build his new church at Purbrook in 1843, using as his architect J. P. Harrison, a Tractarian disciple of Pugin, who was also Keble's architect at Hursley. The rest of the story is that told verbally by Deverell and in writing by Richards in their evidence to the Royal Commission on Ritual in 1867.[9] According to Richards he had wanted to build a church at Purbrook when he was first presented to the rectory of Farlington but had been frustrated in his efforts by the erection of St. George's Waterlooville. In 1839 he again raised the possibility of a church at Purbrook with the Bishop of Winchester, who thought it was unnecessary. At about the same time Deverell had mentioned to him 'the spiritual destitution of Purbrook' and asked if he thought 'that 400*l*. would be sufficient for the squire of the parish to contribute towards a chapel'. Richards had replied that if Deverell would guarantee that sum, he would undertake to get a chapel built within a year. According to Richards, Deverell had replied, 'Oh! there is no hurry – I must build my house first – and then perhaps I shall give a great deal more.' Later on, wrote Richards, he had renewed the subject with Deverell, but there had been a difference of opinion as to whether the new building should be consecrated, Deverell maintaining that it should be both a chapel and schoolroom 'because, if it does not answer, it may be converted to any common or profitable purpose, and there will be no loss of investment'. During Advent 1841 Richards preached at Farlington for the Winchester Diocesan Church Building Society, announcing his intention of raising a fund by means of a weekly offertory for the

purpose of building a church or schoolroom or both at Purbrook. He was unwise enough to quote in his sermon the words of the Homily, 'they builded, decked, and trimmed up their own houses, and suffered God's house to be in ruin and decay'. Deverell, who was present, accused Richards of preaching against him and refused to worship at Farlington church ever again. He later worshipped at St. George's, Waterlooville, and at Widley, but eventually found himself in disagreement with the respective incumbents. Despite Deverell's opposition, Richards obtained a site for his church at Purbrook in 1842, and the foundation stone was laid in 1843. The Bishop of Winchester, however, persisted in his view that any church at Purbrook was unnecessary, even though Richards assured him that he only wanted a chapel-of-ease and had no intention of forming a new parish. At length the Bishop consented on the understanding that the church should be built entirely out of funds supplied by Richards or his personal friends. By 1850 the new church was ready for consecration, but the Bishop procrastinated until 1856, when he agreed to consecrate the new church providing that it had the

support of the parishioners. A meeting of the vestry was held in March, at which Richards proposed that the new church should be consecrated as a chapel-of-ease to Farlington, but an amendment was moved by Deverell to the effect that the new church should be a district church, similar to St. George's, Waterlooville, with an incumbent, which would in due course be erected into a separate parish. It seems reasonable to suppose that Deverell, realising that he was unlikely to be able to control the parish of Farlington, hoped that he might be able to control a district church at Purbrook, and was therefore prepared to press for a district church and even offer to endow it. According to Richards the result of the vestry had been a foregone conclusion as the new church at Purbrook was wanted by his parishioners but it had always been recognised that it should merely be a chapel-of-ease. The question of a district church had never been mentioned and Richards thought that very few of the parishioners understood the significance of the term. On the evening before the vestry Richards was informed that Deverell's emissaries had been round the parish to induce the ratepayers to vote for a district church, the inducements including an invitation to dine at the public house to which the vestry had been adjourned and the promise of a rabbit-shoot the following day. It was not, therefore, surprising that Richards lost his resolution and saw Deverell's amendment carried in the vestry by 74 votes to 14. Richards claimed that many of these votes were improper: some of those voting lived six miles outside the parish, though they presumably had property in it; some were Deverell's labourers who had previously refused to pay the church rate on account of their alleged poverty; and some were merely women. According to Deverell, Richards went to see the Bishop the following morning to tell him, 'I have been out-voted in the vestry. If your lordship will licence my church I shall be satisfied'. The Bishop, however, declined and decided to accept a democratic vote and consecrate it as a district church. Eventually, after doing everything he could to prevent the district being formed, Richards agreed to the division of his parish but only on condition that the patronage of the new church should remain with him, as rector and patron of the mother church, and not be given to Deverell as lord of the manor, or the Bishop of Winchester, who Richards felt would merely present Deverell's nominee. The new church was consecrated in March 1858.

The consecration of Purbrook church marked the end of the first and the beginning of the second stage of the conflict between Richards and Deverell. As well as the formation of the new district at Purbrook, the situation at Waterlooville, which had been a proprietory and non-parochial chapel since its consecration in 1831, was also regularised with the formation of another new district. The lack of need for separate districts, as opposed to additional churches, was well demonstrated by the census figures for 1861; the combined population of the ancient parish of Farlington was 1,174; the new districts of Purbrook and Waterlooville had respective populations of 335 and 243, leaving a scattered population of only 596 still attached to the mother church.[10] At the consecration of Purbrook church the customary problems about vestments and ornaments occurred; the Bishop refused to allow the incumbent-designate of the new district to take any part in the service on the grounds that his scarf had crosses embroidered on it. On being informed by the chancellor of the diocese that the altar had on it a green frontal and candlesticks, the Bishop ordered the removal of what he considered illegal ornaments. Richards was clearly amused by the fact that the Bishop had the frontal, borrowed from Keble and probably seen by the bishop when he re-opened Hursley church in 1846, replaced by a brown tablecloth embroidered with many-coloured flowers, borrowed from the drawing-room of his host. Although Richards experienced some difficulty in staffing Purbrook until the appointment of Alfred Poole in 1861, it soon became clear to Deverell that he was going to be as unsuccessful in controlling the spiritual direction of the new district as he had been in controlling that of Farlington. In 1859 he organised a petition against the candlesticks and flower vases which had been replaced on the altar at Purbrook after the consecration, but was unable to secure their permanent removal. Using this as an excuse Deverell decided to open his own chapel, which was registered under the Religious Worship Act in January 1860 and served by the Revd. Thomas Roberts, formerly minister of the Countess of Huntingdon's chapel in Gloucester. Though this was legally a dissenting meeting house, Deverell tried to give the impression that it was really an Anglican establishment. According to Richards, Deverell announced in the newspapers 'that he had appointed a minister of the Church of England, from St. Mary's Chapel, Gloucester, to officiate in his Church of Christ's Church, Purbrook'. In fact the chapel was in St. Mary's Square, Gloucester, and not the Anglican establishment which Deverell had implied. Called upon to explain this, Deverell had replied that Roberts was 'a regularly ordained minister of the Church of England, although not episcopally ordained – the difference being that a regularly ordained minister was a regular minister, and episcopally ordained was one who was subject to Parliament'. As

The Revd. E. T. Richards, Rector of Farlington 1826–87, taken towards the end of his life. From an original lent by Miss Mary Brooks, the present patron of the benefice.

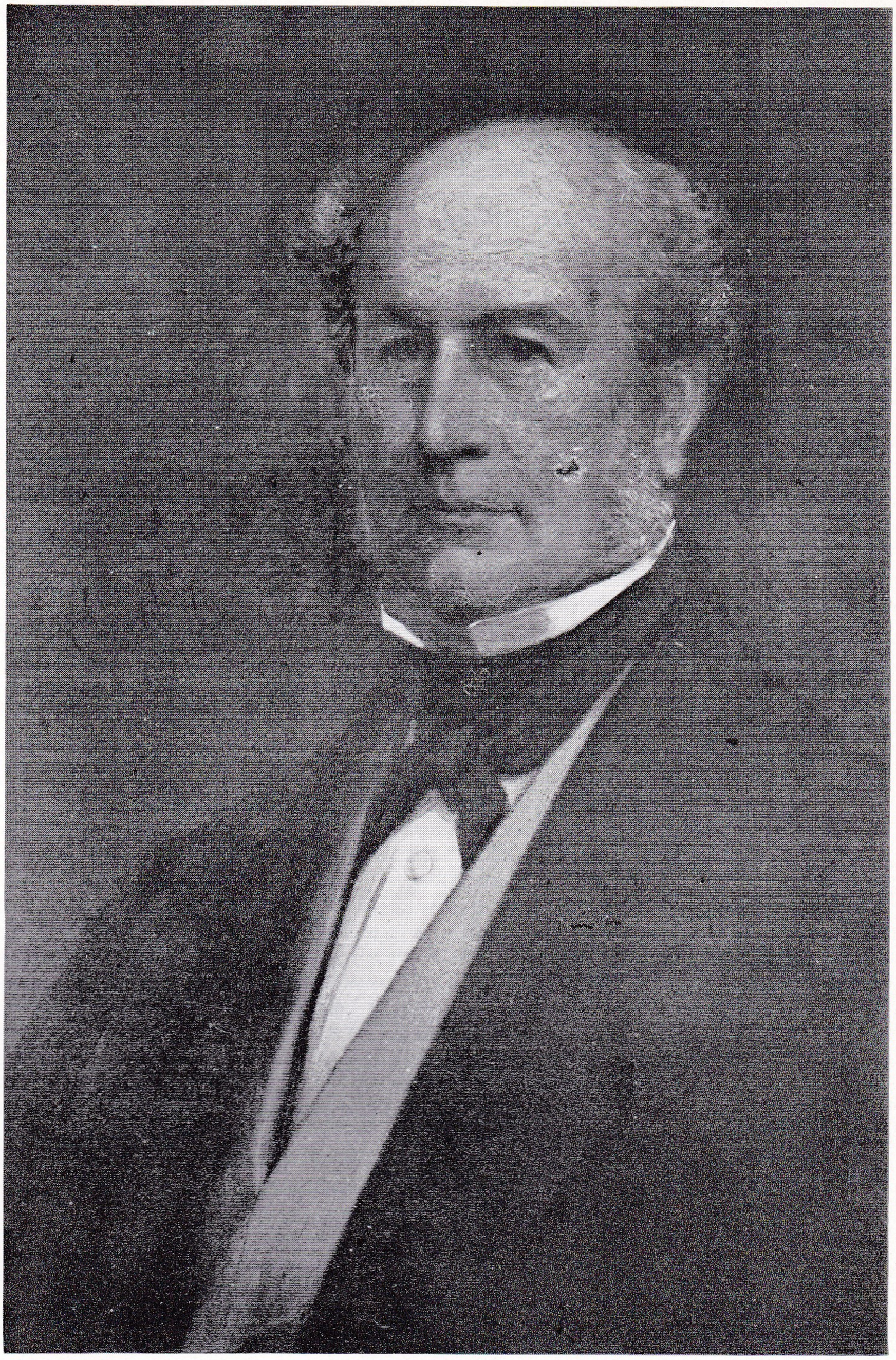
far as Richards was concerned, the whole of Deverell's case showed a persistent maintenance of his claim to dictate to him how Purbrook church should be administered, 'not by the law of the Church but by the predilections and tastes of Mr. Deverell, who is practically a Dissenter – a claim which never for an instant could be conceded'. For Richards, Deverell had avowedly established a schism at Purbrook; his church was 'nothing more than a centre of division and sin, whereby he has attempted to delude everybody, from the Bishop down to the poorest labourer in the village'. Richards regarded the act as totally unjustifiable; after all Purbrook church was far from extreme, there was virtually no ritual at Farlington, and at Waterlooville and other neighbouring churches there was 'to be found the most complete abeyance of the full requirements of order and law of the English branch of the Catholic Church of Christ'. Deverell's act of schism was not without parallels elsewhere; the Free Church of England was established in a similar manner and for a similar reason at Bridgetown in Devon in 1844, and together with the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion provided spiritual support for Anglicans who felt that the Protestant purity of the establishment was being compromised by its more advanced clergy. Not surprisingly, Deverell was very closely questioned by the Ritual Commissioners when he appeared before them on 1 July 1867. Asked whether his building was licensed as a dissenting chapel, he replied 'yes, it is licensed for members of the Church of England protesting in self-defence against the Romanizing principles and practices as carried out in this locality', by which he meant the churches of Farlington, Purbrook, Widley and Wymering. Deverell claimed that his chapel was well supported by people who claimed to be Anglicans; Admiral Grey, the second-in-command at Portsmouth dockyard, who lived at Purbrook, had taken sittings there; so had 'Lady Hayes, the daughter of Lady Pakenham, and her family', Sir Lucius Curtis, 'the two principal farmers, Mr. Pettis from Wymering, and Mr. Randall from Farlington'. The poor also attended and he thought 'very few comparatively' attended their parish churches. He denied that he had put pressure on his labourers to attend his chapel and not the parish church. He had also attracted dissenters including the clerk; he maintained that he was in fact 'holding together the Church of England' in his neighbourhood to the best of his ability. He was asked about the services in his chapel by the most distinguished of the Tractarians on the commission, Beresford Hope. He said the altar stood where it would in a church, at the east end, with a purple cloth on it and the letters I.H.S. The minister preached in a black gown, but otherwise had adopted the use of surplice and scarf at his request. 'You do not object then to a certain amount of formality and ritualism?' asked Beresford Hope. 'It is the custom of the country to wear a surplice', replied Deverell, 'I have been used to it all my life'.

The difficulties of having to deal with this schism placed a considerable strain on the incumbent of Purbrook, Alfred Poole. Despite this he attempted slowly to introduce the teachings of the Oxford Movement to his parishioners, whose reactions generally ranged from hostile to apathetic, and to publicise them through the establishment in January 1864 of one of the earliest parish magazines in Hampshire, or indeed in any rural parish.[11] He had established a weekly communion service at Purbrook, at first as an early celebration, but had been compelled to abandon this after a year for a weekly celebration after Morning Prayer, as it seemed to him 'a shocking thing that it should happen even occasionally that the Holy Table should be spread and none be present to record the Sacrifice.[12] A surpliced choir was introduced on Easter Sunday 1865; a service of 'Litany and Reproaches' was held on Good Friday; there were regular sung Eucharists on major festivals; Helmore's plainsong was used in the choral services; *Hymns*

John Deverell, Esquire, of Purbrook Park, Lord of the Manor of Farlington. From an original oil painting now in Deverell Hall, Purbrook, by kind permission of the Secretary, Mr. H. J. Yates.

Ancient and Modern was used, as it was at Farlington; coloured frontals and stoles were gradually acquired, and both an altar cross and a processional cross were acquired in 1869. The real problem was in trying to strengthen the spiritual life of the parish. There were only 27 communicants at Purbrook at Easter 1866; 10 years later there were 37, rising to 46 in 1877 and 50 in 1878, but dropping to 41 in 1879. The numbers were usually about half the Easter figure at Christmas and must have been very small each Sunday. Poole tried to encourage his parishioners to take advantage of the sacrament of penance in his Lenten letters, but clearly without much success, and he frequently complained that scarcely anyone valued the daily services. Yet clearly he had some support in the parish; a letter in the magazine for November 1866 thought it a great pity that the altar candles were not yet lighted at Purbrook; some members of his congregation were members of the Association for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom, an almost exclusively ritualist organisation, and of the equally ritualist English Church Union, a Portsdown branch of which was established for the parishes of Farlington, Purbrook, Widley and Wymering in 1867. By September 1868 Poole felt encouraged enough to establish an early celebration of the Holy Communion on the second Sunday of each month, specifically to encourage communicants to receive fasting. The magazine contained occasional attacks on John Deverell's private chapel; one correspondent wanted 'to be informed what is meant by the "Free Church of England". I saw a letter in the paper lately from Mr. Roberts, who signs himself "Minister of Christ Church" and says he is a member of "the Conference of Lady Huntingdon and of the Free Church of England" . . . If I understand aright, Mr. Roberts is not an ordained minister of the Church, and the building called "Christ Church" is not consecrated, but only licensed by the Government as a dissenting place of worship. Now, sir, if I were to call myself a Free Magistrate or a Free Admiral of the Fleet, I fancy Mr. Deverell or Sir Lucius Curtis would think I was making *very free* with what properly belong to them . . . There can be no Church without a Bishop; and certainly the Bishop has nothing to do with either Mr. Roberts or his place of worship.'[13]

In fact Bishop Sumner seems to have done very little about Deverell's chapel and it is possible that his resignation and replacement by the much more dynamic Samuel Wilberforce, translated from Oxford in 1869, was responsible for the next significant development in the story. Clearly Deverell was becoming embarrassed by the attacks on his position and he was anxious to find a means of regularising the situation. The answer was provided by the establishment of garrisons at the recently completed Forts Widley and Purbrook after 1868. Accordingly Deverell wrote to the War Department on 13 May 1870, saying that he had 'submitted to the Bishop of Winchester a proposal for building and endowing a new Church near Portsdown Hill for the accommodation of Troops occupying the Barracks in Forts Widly [sic] and Purbrook', and that the bishop had approved the scheme.[14] The idea was that the War Department would provide the site, and this they agreed to do on condition that some free sittings were provided for the troops; the conveyance was dated 30 December 1871. Deverell then applied to the Ecclesiastical Commission for the creation of a new district, carefully avoiding all mention of his existing chapel. He simply stated that there was no church in the proposed new district that was licensed by the Bishop, and that he was proposing to build and endow one. The application was approved by the Bishop, who presumably saw this as the best way to heal the existing schism.[15] Poole and Richards saw the matter rather differently. The new district was to be carved out of the parishes of Farlington, Purbrook and Widley, and the respective incumbents had to be consulted about the proposal. The rector of Widley, who was barely affected, signified his consent. Poole, who stood to lose half his parish, and Richards were incensed that official recognition should be given to any new church of which John Deverell was to be the patron, this being part of the bargain. Poole wrote to the Commission on 16 and 24 June 1870, objecting that the advantage to be seen in the ending of the schism would be totally outweighed by the disadvantage of an unnecessary division of his parish, which in any case was barely viable, as Richards had recognised in 1858. 'Mr. Deverell, as a Dissenter, and having built a dissenting meeting house in the District, is of no service to the Church', wrote Poole in his earlier letter. But the Commission resolved that it could not 'take any cognizance of the existence of the meeting house to which he referred'. Richards, in his letters of 20 and 27 July 1870, recalled the events of 1858 in which he had been forced to accept a division of his own parish against his better judgement. He thought that 'against the advantage that would arise from doing away with the existing schism established by Mr. Deverell, it is feared that the change would only introduce a schismatical feeling *into* the church instead of being *outside* it, and still further embarrass the clergy in their work'. He noted that, apart from the two forts, there were only 16 houses in the proposed new district, and that nine of these had been purchased by the War Department and



were due for demolition. He pointed out that Deverell was merely buying himself back into church membership 'without any act of discipline', and that this could create an unfortunate precedent. He noted that, as Deverell had threatened to continue and strengthen the schism if his proposals were not accepted, the Bishop and the Commission were in fact responding to blackmail. Despite an official protest by Richards, the Commission decided to ignore the objections, and an Order in Council granting approval for the new district 'notwithstanding such objections' as had been made, was published on 17 August 1870.[16] The new church of Christ Church, Portsdown, designed by Colson in a cheap Norman style, was consecrated on 30 July 1874. Although Roberts was replaced by an incumbent in Anglican orders, he was himself finally ordained by the

The chancel of St. Andrew's Church, Farlington, as rebuilt in 1872, from an original in Portsmouth Central Library. Note the typical Tractarian altar frontal, hangings and ornaments.

Bishop of Oxford in 1872 and died in 1879.[17] As Richards had predicted the schism was not healed. Purbrook parishioners were informed that Christ Church was 'now liberated from the incubus of pew rents. This is a great gain. The poor man will now feel that he has as much right to a place in it as the rich man, which he has, whether it be granted him or not.[18] The pewing at Purbrook had always been free since the church was opened. Attacks were made on the liturgical practices of Christ Church: 'it is gratifying to hear that the extraordinary innovation of an Evening Communion on Good Friday in a neighbouring church proved an entire failure, as the persons for whom it was apparently intended preferred attending a Tea Meeting, got up on that most solemn fast by the Dissenters. It is creditable to the Churchpeople of that District that they gave no countenance to such an outrageous piece of ultra-Protestant ritualism'. This was followed by an exhaustive article on the evils of holding communion services in the evening, and thus preventing the 'high church' practice of fasting from midnight beforehand, clearly intended to be read by the minister who had thus 'compromised the usage of the Catholic Church'.[19] It appears that Deverell had as little success in his personal relationships with the clergy he nominated to the vicarage of Portsdown as he had had with those at Farlington, Purbrook, Waterlooville and Widley. Two incumbents left in quick succession. 'The end of it is that a scheme which must have cost some thousands of pounds, has so far failed to obtain for its author the autocracy he desired and the object he had in view of exhausting our churches'.[20] The church eventually prospered, however, particularly after the death of John Deverell and the transfer of its patronage from his successors to the Simeon Trustees; the churchmanship has remained Evangelical. The nonsense of the division of the parish of Farlington remained for some time. In 1871 the parishes of Purbrook and Portsdown had populations of 230 and 167 respectively; that of Farlington had risen to 851. Even by 1911 the population of the ancient parish of Farlington was only 3,184; of the four districts into which it had been divided Farlington had 1,429, Waterlooville 1,033, Portsdown 497 and Purbrook 225; the population at Portsdown included a garrison of 304 at Forts Widley and Purbrook and 94 children at the industrial school established by the late John Deverell, leaving a real parish population of only 99.[21]

The alienation of Edward Tew Richards and John Deverell from one another made it impossible for the former to do much about the condition of Farlington parish church as the latter was able to control the vestry. Richards had largely financed the church at Purbrook with the help of a few other subscriptions. He had also built a school at Purbrook in 1851, again largely out of his own pocket. He was not in a position immediately to finance personally the repairs necessary at Farlington and he could get little financial assistance from the parish. It was ironic, therefore, that the churchwardens in their reply to episcopal visitation queries in 1861 alleged that Richards 'has been told for several years past' to repair the chancel but was only now intending to do so.[22] In 1867 Richards told a vestry meeting that he had put all his efforts in the past into building the church at Purbrook because that was where the need, in terms of population, was greatest. He felt, however, that the time had now come to rebuild Farlington church since, if it was not rebuilt, it would simply fall down through neglect. On the advice of John Deverell the vestry refused to levy a rate towards rebuilding, but agreed not to oppose the rebuilding if it was done by subscription.[23] Despite the state of the church Richards did his best to provide the services he felt were necessary; there were daily services in church and a weekly Communion Service on Sundays after Morning Prayer.[24] Later on an early celebration at 9 a.m. was introduced on the second and fourth Sundays of each month, the later celebrations on other Sundays being retained.[25] The choir was moved from the west end of the church to the chancel in 1864 but was not put in surplices until 1872.[26] Frustrated by the intransigence of his parishioners, Richards determined to rebuild the chancel at Farlington, which was his responsibility as rector, and to allow the nave, which was that of the parishioners, to remain in a ruinous condition. At a vestry meeting on 11 April 1871, at which Richards was not present, 'it appearing to this Vestry that the Chancel, the Vestry and part of the church had been pulled down, the churchwarden was requested to ascertain whether any Faculty had been obtained and to take such steps as he may be advised thereon'.[27] Richards, however, pressed on with the work, employing as his architect the distinguished Tractarian, George Edmund Street, who had carried out successful restorations at both Wymering and the Royal Garrison Church in Portsmouth. The new chancel was opened by Bishop Wilberforce on 28 October 1872. Its fine stone vault, stained glass designed by the architect, and good quality furnishings, erected as an extension to a tumble-down nave formed an incongruous sight, which so shocked the Bishop that he wrote immediately to the churchwardens to demand that they took action towards rebuilding the nave.[28] Earlier in 1872 an attempt to raise a voluntary rate of one shilling in the pound towards this object had been abandoned after further opposition

from John Deverell.[29] The remonstrance appeared to have its effect. Although Bishop Wilberforce died in 1873, the demolition of the nave was undertaken in 1874, with Richards appealing for funds for the replacement.[30] The new nave, also by Street, was completed and reopened on 10 November 1875. 'None ought to be more thankful for the wiping away of this disgrace [of the former church] than the parish vestry to whose contemptible parsimony and long continued resistance to every attempt made to bring about the restoration or the reparation of the church, that disgrace was owing'.[31] The reopening services included a choral celebration of the Holy Communion at 9 a.m., at which Bishop Browne of Winchester was assisted by Richards and his son, the rector of Plumstead in Norfolk. Morning Prayer and Sermon followed at 11 a.m., again fully choral, the clergy and choir in surplices; 'there were one or two "black sheep" as someone profanely styled the clergy in black gowns'. The music was mostly Gregorian, 'here and there enlivened by an Anglican tune'. The new church was considered to be 'the finest specimen of a restored church in this neighbourhood'. The altar had a frontal of red and white silk, and on the super-altar, or retable, were four vases of flowers, some massive candlesticks and an altar cross with the emblems of the Evangelists.[32] The congregations remained small, however; in 1876 the parish magazine recorded 45 Easter and 33 Christmas communicants, the comparative figures declining to 32 and 28 in 1877.

After Richards' death in 1887 the parish fossilised. His son, Arthur James Richards, resigned his Norfolk living to act as curate to his father in 1882, and succeeded him as rector. He did not resign until 1925, after which it was noted that the congregations had increased. A weekly early celebration had not been introduced until 1922.[33] After 1870, however, the parish boundaries remained intact. When Portsmouth overspill began to reach Farlington in the 1920s, it was decided to build a chapel-of-ease at Drayton. The new church of the Resurrection, designed by Randoll Blacking, was consecrated on 11 October 1930, but it has remained a chapel-of-ease, and a new rectory was built in the middle of the parish between the two churches.

WYMERING

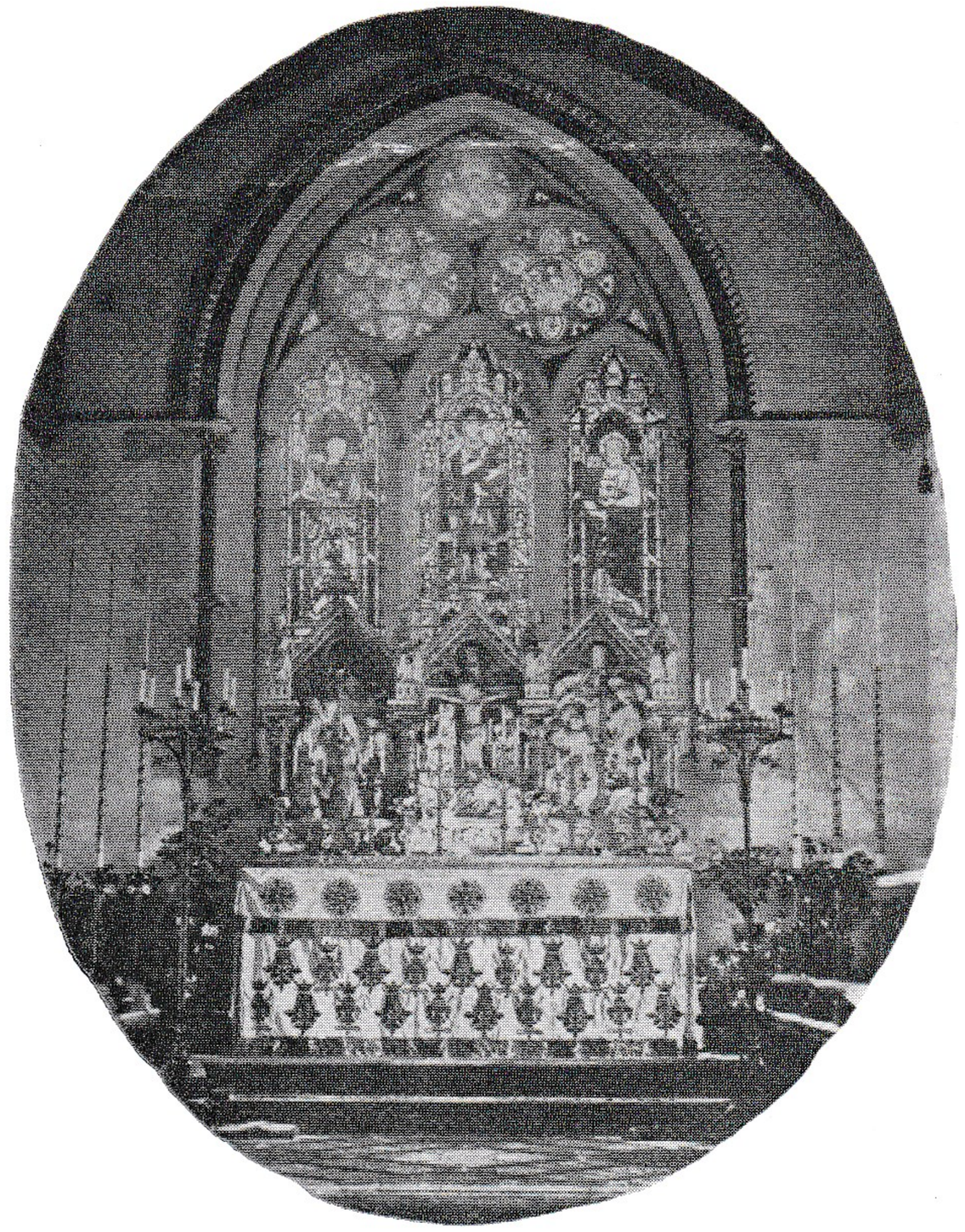
The parishes of Widley and Wymering had been held in plurality since 1559, when Nicholas Dixon, rector of Widley, became also vicar of Wymering; this had eventually resulted in the formation of a consolidated benefice. Between 1631 and 1851 the majority of incumbents were fellows of Winchester College, pluralists and non-resident.[34] Until 1907 the parish of Wymering included the northern part of Portsea Island, known as Hilsea, as well as an area on the mainland; the village of Cosham was partly in the parish of Widley and partly in that of Wymering. In 1851 the total population was 1,316, 565 in Widley and 751 in Wymering; about half of this total population lived in Cosham, the rest being widely scattered.[35] The incumbent, Henry Sissmore, appointed in 1814, and

The chancel of Wymering Church before the restoration of 1861, from an original in Portsmouth City Record Office. Note that the altar has been given the usual Tractarian frontal and ornaments, though these are obviously of a temporary nature.

previously vicar of Portsmouth, was a resident fellow of Winchester College and non-resident in the parish. There was, however, a resident curate at both Widley and Wymering, and the respective congregations on 30 March 1851 were very similar: 92 in the morning and 131 in the afternoon at Widley with 59 Sunday scholars; 126 in the morning and 95 in the afternoon at Wymering with 57 Sunday scholars. The Wymering congregation was said to be 'rather below the average'. There was an Independent chapel at Cosham, established in 1841, which attracted an evening congregation of 65 on 30 March 1851, though the average congregation was estimated at 72.[36] The last major repair of Wymering church had been in 1802, but Widley church had been rebuilt, after partial collapse two years earlier, in 1849.

In 1851 Andrew Nugée was presented to the united benefice, the patronage of which had been acquired by his father in an open sale a few years beforehand. Nugée was a fairly conservative Tractarian who had only just begun to make his mark on the parish when he died in 1858. He had previously married Elizabeth, the daughter of his neighbour at Farlington, Edward Tew Richards, and this led to particularly close bonds between the two parishes. When Andrew Nugée died his father offered the living to his younger son, George Nugée, incumbent from 1859 until 1872, and patron also after his father's death. George Nugée was born in 1819, and educated at Shrewsbury School and Trinity College, Cambridge, before ordination to a title at the fashionable Tractarian church of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, in the diocese of London in 1845. He became first priest-in-charge of the district church of St. Barnabas, Pimlico, in 1850 and he founded two sisterhoods and a college for missionaries in London. On his presentation to the livings of Widley and Wymering, he installed one of these sisterhoods, known as the Community of St. Mary the Virgin, in the vicarage, and himself in the manor house. He later established a community for men, the Priory of St. Augustine, in a house at Cosham, but soon transferred them to the manor house; in so doing he claimed to be re-establishing the Augustinian priory of Southwick, dissolved at the Reformation. The revival of monasticism was not Nugée's only interest; as a personal friend of John Mason Neale, George Frederick Lee and Ambrose Phillipps de Lisle, he was passionately interested in the reunion of the various branches of Catholic Christianity. He was a founder member and officer of both the Eastern Churches Association and the Association for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom, and was later associated with the ill-fated Order of Corporate Reunion.[37]

Compared with his brother, Nugée was a very advanced ritualist. His first need at Wymering was to complete the restoration of the church begun by his



The high altar of Wymering Church after the restoration of 1861, from an original in Portsmouth City Record Office. This represents a typical ritualist altar of the period, and should be compared with the more moderate vesting of the altar at Farlington.

brother in 1858. Their father had originally indicated that he was prepared to donate £500 towards the restoration. After his death the vestry was informed that he had bequeathed £1,200 towards the restoration. The plans submitted to them, drawn up by George Edmund Street, were unanimously accepted and George Nugée was asked to put them into effect.[38] The building was reopened in 1861. Nugée must have breathed a sigh of relief when he discovered that Bishop Sumner of Winchester, who had objected to some of the Tractarian fittings at Purbrook in 1858, was unable to officiate as he had to consecrate another church on the same day. His place was taken by the 'high church' Bishop Gilbert of Chichester. 'The stoles worn by the Vicar of Wymering and his curates were embroidered on the neck with gold crosses. . . . Not the least noticeable amongst the congregation were the "Mother and Sisters" of the religious house . . . called St. Mary the Virgin's Home'. The canticles and psalms were plainsong and that ebullient Tractarian, Archdeacon Denison, preached at the evening service.[39] After the morning service when the Bishop and clergy had returned from the church to the manor house, 'the sisterhood fell upon their knees, and his lordship gave them his benediction in a very earnest and impressive manner'.[40] The newspaper reports, however, hide the strong opposition to Nugée's 'high church' practices. In 1860, after a dispute in the vestry, a poll was demanded for the election of a churchwarden by John Deverell, who owned land in the parishes of Widley and Wymering, as well as at Farlington. In the election Deverell's candidate defeated Nugée's by only 53 votes to 48, but the principal landowners mostly sided with Deverell. They included Thomas Thistlethwayte of Southwick Priory, the lord of the manor; the Rev. E. S. Phelps of East Cosham House, the chaplain to Portsmouth Dockyard; John Burrill of Cosham Lodge; and Admiral Sir Lucius Curtis of East Cosham Lodge, who also owned Gatcombe House in Hilsea. Only Admiral Sir Francis William Austen of Portsdown Lodge, among the principal landowners, supported Nugée's candidate.[41] Sir Lucius Curtis, then aged 74, had been 'for more than twenty years the highly esteemed Provincial Grand Master of the Freemasons of Hampshire'. Sir Francis Austen, then aged 86, was the brother of Jane Austen, the novelist.[42] His daughter was a strong supporter of the new church at Purbrook and had given an 'exquisite' chalice veil to Farlington church.[43] Sir Lucius Curtis was Nugée's principal opponent and a strong ally of John Deverell's, whose schism he supported. In 1867 he organised a memorial, addressed to the Bishop of Winchester, complaining of the ritualistic practices at Wymering, a full copy of which is included as an appendix to this paper. The memorial is a very typical document of the type that ritualistic practices usually encouraged at a time when there was a genuine though totally irrational fear that the Bishop of Rome was hourly awaiting a suitable opportunity to make a take-over bid for the Church of England. The memorial was signed by a total of 177 parishioners of Widley and Wymering, about one-tenth of the total population at that time.

Nugée never denied most of the allegations made against him, except the inaccuracies that were usually due to a lack of liturgical knowledge on the part of the complainants. His evidence to the Royal Commission on Ritual in 1867 is therefore of some interest, especially as he was one of only very few ritualist clergy invited to give evidence;[44] Lee offered but his offer was ignored. The questioning was begun by the Archbishop of Canterbury who concentrated on the services at Nugée's churches. Nugée explained that he only had Sunday services at Widley, then the normal pattern, but that at Wymering he had a daily celebration of Holy Communion at 7.30 a.m., with Mattins at 8.30 a.m. and Evensong at 5 p.m., both of which were choral. On Sundays at Wymering he had an early celebration at 8 a.m.; Mattins was at 10.30 a.m. followed by a late choral celebration and sermon; Evensong was at 3.30 p.m. There was a Sunday evening service at a school chapel in Cosham at 7 p.m. He had used the full eucharistic vestments at Wymering since 1864 and a cope for other services, but vestments had only recently been introduced at Widley; he took the eastward position at

the consecration, but he was always careful to read the epistle and gospel facing the people. He was asked by the Archbishop of Armagh about opposition to vestments. He replied that there had been none; that, on the contrary, the church was now full whereas it had once been empty, and that there had been an immediate trebling of the offertory after he had introduced vestments. He thought, however, that some of his parishioners did not at first like the use of incense, but that they now accepted it. In reply to questions from Earl Stanhope, he confirmed that he lighted the altar candles for symbolic rather than utilitarian reasons, and that he mixed wine with water at the offertory. Far from losing the bulk of his congregation his incumbency had witnessed the closure of the Independent chapel at Cosham, 'the proprietor of that chapel being in my choir at the present moment, and being one of my chief supporters'. He told the Bishop of Oxford that he regarded his greatest pastoral success as being that with the garrison at Portsmouth; he had been able to attract to his services not just soldiers from the barracks at Hilsea, in his parish, but those from other barracks in Portsmouth who previously 'used to lounge about Southsea Common on Sunday'. He also considered that the adoption of more advanced ritual did not encourage secessions to Rome but rather prevented them. He was asked by the Bishop of Gloucester about his confessional practice; he replied that confessions were frequently heard in his church, but that he did not have a confessional as such; 'the priest sits within the [altar] rail, and those who confess kneel outside the rail'. Asked about the number of his communicants, he estimated these as 50 on an average Sunday, and about 150 on the major festivals. Asked about his authority for some of his innovations, he stated that he conformed to the pre-Reformation Sarum rather than the modern Roman use, except in the case of the liturgical colours where he thought it was more sensible to adopt the Roman use; he referred particularly to the *Directorium Anglicanum*, first published in 1858, and later substantially revised by Lee, which attempted to relate Sarum ritual to the services of the Book of Common Prayer. He summarised his position to Beresford Hope as a desire 'to restore the Church of England in her beauty and in her ritual to what she was before the Reformation'. Nugée was then asked in some detail about the copy of the memorial from Sir Lucius Curtis and others, which had been submitted to the commission. He said he had never seen the text of this and that it had probably been organised by some local supporters of the Church Association, an anti-ritualist society founded in 1865. However, he agreed substantially with the description of the service given there, though he pointed out that there were only two candles actually on the altar, that the alleged 'mason's trowel' was the incense boat and that the description of the vestments and some of his liturgical actions was hardly accurate. He had a few fairly cutting remarks to make about the memorialists; one he described as having been to church 'perhaps once or twice in the last five years'. On the whole Nugée was at pains to point out that he was not an advanced ritualist; he did not, for instance, use wafer bread or gospel lights, nor did he cense the oblations before or after consecration, nor was there any public commemoration of the departed at services, nor was the communion service openly called 'Mass'. Most of Nugée's evidence related to events at Wymering rather than Widley. John Deverell, in his evidence, informed the commission that he had found at Widley 'two very large candles, which . . . are lighted every Sunday by what they call an acolyte, before the Communion Service'.

A very great deal of the hostility of the laity, especially the wealthier laity, against Nugée was, one suspects, more on account of his development of the religious life at Wymering than on account of his ritual. This was frequently the case. In many other parishes, and generally in the press, the two subjects which really sparked off conflict were confession and monasticism, both of which were deemed to be decidedly un-English and quasi-pornographic. Nugée, of course, had championed monasticism; his advanced pro-Romanism in his ecumenical interests was also tantamount to ecclesiastical treason in the eyes of his critics. The sisters he had brought with him to Wymering from London; the community consisted of a superior and nine sisters, who had seats behind the choir in the parish church, and who attended the sick, looked after orphans and conducted a school. The brotherhood was established at Wymering and consisted of about a dozen young men by 1867; it began in a house at Cosham, which it soon outgrew, after which the community moved to the manor house with Nugée as the resident superior. Nugée's ecumenical activities at Wymering included acting as host to the Revd. Julius Ferrette, the self-styled Bishop of Iona, a former Dominican friar, who arrived in England in 1866 claiming to have been consecrated as Patriarchal Legate for Western Europe, by the bishop of Emesa acting under the authority of the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch. Ferrette took part in services, though Nugée was careful not to invite him to celebrate, at both Purbrook and Wymering, at the former on the occasion of its harvest festival: 'at 11 o'clock the morning service began with a procession of the choir and clergy, amongst the latter, one seldom

seen within the walls of the English Church – the Greek Bishop of Iona (now on a visit to the Vicar of Wymering) in his graceful Episcopal habit'.[45]

It used to be thought that it was largely as a result of his ecumenical and monastic activities, which were somewhat restricted at Wymering, that Nugée resolved to return to London. In a way it was, but Nugée's move may not have been a voluntary one. The evidence of this previously well-hidden episode in Nugée's career has been brought to light by the recent availability of the private papers of Bishop Samuel Wilberforce, acquired by the Bodleian Library in the mid-1960s; among a small group of papers relating to his short period as Bishop of Winchester between 1869 and 1873, there is a fragmentary correspondence, mostly draft letters, from Wilberforce to Nugée and others about allegations brought against Nugée by certain parishioners.[46]

On 8 May 1872 Wilberforce wrote to Nugée:

> 'I have received a formal requirement signed by Mr. H. Padwick, Major John Breton and Captain Frederick Pelham Warren praying me to issue a commission to enquire into charges of impropriety and immorality (especially but not exclusively with a person called Sister Agatha) brought against you. I do not see how I can refuse to issue the commission. The evidence, a sketch of which is sent me, if brought before the commissioners and judged by them credible would unquestionably lead to your condemnation, as the mere publication of it must cause terrible scandal.
>
> I first therefore lay the matter before you thus confidentially that unless your conscience acquits you before God of all these charges you may by a timely retirement save the Church this scandal and yourself such open shame.
>
> I wish further to suggest to you that if you are conscious of innocence, as I trust you are, you should bring an action for libel at once against Mr. Bailey, your accuser. Then instead of being under a criminal accusation as defendant you would be plaintiff in a civil action.'

It is clear from the subsequent draft letters that Wilberforce did not receive any adequate explanations from Nugée and felt unable, therefore, to offer him any support. On 3 October 1872 he was able to write to Nugée's accuser:

> 'Now that Mr. Nugée has resigned his living, signed a written pledge not to officiate there without my written permission, is about to remove the so-called sisterhood, and to go himself into the distant East, I am anxious to prevent useless and infamous scandal. I [have] reason to believe that Mr. Brook [acted] from violent party spirit and I fear malignity is trying to stir up mischief, and I should be obliged to you if you would at once write to Mr. Padwick (not naming me) and reclaim all written evidence, letters &c you have sent him.'

It would seem that the evidence was effectively suppressed. The references to Mr. Brook and 'the distant East' remain a mystery, and we shall never know whether there was any truth in the allegations. What is clear, however, is that Nugée either did not effectively refute them or did not think fit to do so, but chose to resign quietly so as to prevent a scandal. He entered into a private arrangement with the Revd. G. T. Cotham, vicar of St. John's, Walworth, whereby he transferred his operations to that parish to look after some of the worst slums in South London, and there he remained until shortly before his death in 1892, performing the dual role of mission priest and monastic superior. The brotherhood survived until after Nugée's death, when it disintegrated. The sisterhood seems also to have survived until Nugée's death, but its subsequent history is not known, and it probably merged with another community.

Nugée's move to London coincided with some secret negotiations, begun by his friend Frederick George Lee, the ritualist incumbent of nearby All Saints, Lambeth, to bring about the corporate reunion of Catholic Christendom by means of a scheme of universally valid orders. The negotiations were completed by 1877 when Lee and two Anglican colleagues were consecrated bishops near Venice by a mysterious triumvirate of prelates, possibly including a Roman Catholic bishop and possibly with the connivance of the papacy. An Order of Corporate Reunion was launched, in which the three new bishops, whose identities were not fully revealed until several years afterwards, offered to reunite the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches by validating the orders of Anglican clergy. The scheme was a total disaster. However much Anglican 'high churchmen' might have resented what they considered to be the Protestant attitudes of the Anglican establishment, and the 1870s was a period in which 'high churchmen' were under great pressure from their opponents, the majority of them were strongly anti-Roman Catholic and much insulted by the view that their orders might be invalid. It should be remembered that Anglican orders were not officially declared 'null and void' by the Pope until 1896, though this was the majority Roman

Catholic view beforehand. Lee and his colleagues had totally misjudged the likely reactions of most Anglican 'high churchmen' to the scheme they were putting forward, and Lee himself eventually became a Roman Catholic. It is not clear what part Nugée played in the Order of Corporate Reunion. In view of his experience as Secretary of the Association for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom, which had brought him into contact with the Roman Catholic authorities in the 1860s, he may well have undertaken some, if not all, of the preliminary negotiations which led to the 1877 consecrations; he was not, however, one of those consecrated, and it is not even known whether he was re-ordained by one of the new bishops. What is certain

The Revd. George Nugée, Rector of Widley and Vicar of Wymering 1859–72, taken in eucharistic vestments and biretta by a Southsea photographer. From an original lent by Mr. E. G. Nugée, the present patron of the benefice.

is that Nugée's monastery, known as St. Austin's Priory, Walworth, became the spiritual headquarters of the Order of Corporate Reunion. The order operated in strict secrecy, and all its records were deliberately destroyed by its officers before their deaths; it is probable that relatively few Anglican clergy were re-ordained, but a good many Anglo-Catholic ordinands, including Robert Dolling, later missioner of St. Agatha's, Landport, visited St. Austin's Priory and its superior, who now adopted the title of Provost Nugée. The community was never very large, mostly consisting of men of substantial private means, and has, perhaps, best been described as 'a residential club for religious eccentrics'.[47] Although nominally still Anglicans, the leaders of the Order of Corporate Reunion, such as Nugée and Lee, had by their actions virtually excluded themselves from real membership of the Church of England. Nugée's death in 1892 passed virtually unnoticed, except by those associated with the work of his community, which had undertaken some useful missionary activity in a socially deprived area. How far, one wonders, had his possibly enforced exile from Wymering in 1872 driven Nugée into this isolated and unrealistic theological position?

As patron of the livings Nugée was, however, able to maintain the doctrinal and liturgical traditions he had established at Wymering and Widley by appointing as his successor H. B. Smith, his curate since 1870. The Sunday services, with celebrations of Holy Communion at 8 a.m. and 11.15 a.m., were retained by Smith, who did not retire until 1912, as was the daily celebration of Holy Communion.[48] The congregations at Wymering also remained good; at Easter 1877 there were 63 communicants at the first celebration, and 'the Church at all the other services was very full, and what was most pleasing to notice, they were mostly parishioners'.[49] It was assumed that in due course the living would once again be presented to a member of the Nugée family, but although they have retained the patronage this has never happened. Andrew Nugée's son and George's nephew, Francis Edward, was ordained on 21 September 1879 to a title at Roath, Cardiff, the then rector of which, F. W. Puller, was a leading Anglo-Catholic who later became a monk in the Society of St. John the Evangelist (Cowley Fathers). Commenting on this, H. B. Smith wrote 'it is pleasant to known that he has commenced . . . in so organised and well worked parish, as . . . on the death of the present vicar, he will come to Wymering'.[50] Francis Edward Nugée assisted at the funeral of his grandfather, Edward Tew Richards, late rector of Farlington, in 1887. In 1892 he succeeded his uncle as patron of Widley and Wymering, but did not appoint himself to the vacant living in 1912, accepting instead the important vicarage of St. Martin's, Leicester, later the cathedral of the new diocese, and an honorary canonry of Peterborough, in 1913.

H. B. Smith was succeeded as rector of Widley and vicar of Wymering by E. W. Babbage, incumbent from 1912 until 1950. During that period the population of the parishes grew from a figure of 2,372 (1911 census) to one of 30,688 (1951 census), the main cause being their almost total inclusion within the borough of Portsmouth in 1920 and the subsequent development of Cosham and Paulsgrove. This growth was to cause considerable difficulties within the parish when its division was proposed. Babbage's first difficulty, however, was with the church at Widley, which was a great deal further from the nominal population of the parish, now concentrated in Cosham, than the church at Wymering. In 1881 a fund had been started to move the church building physically from Widley to Cosham, but it never really got off the ground. By 1912 services were held only once a month at Widley, and in 1919 they were discontinued altogether by a resolution of the vestry, which never met again, and with the sanction of the Bishop. The building was, however, cleaned fortnightly until 1937 when this was also discontinued on the recommendation of the Archdeacon. His successor, however, took a different view. Writing to the Bishop on 11 July 1938 he claimed that nobody cared about the church, that it had never been visited by his predecessor or by the present rural dean; and on 4 August 1940 he stated that 'it would seem that the policy of the Wymering and Widley Parochial Church Council is so to leave Widley Church that in due course the roof must fall in and the church become derelict . . . [yet] taking long views, just as in 1912 Wymering was a village, so in 1968 Widley may lie in the centre of a new Housing Area'.[51] This prophecy has yet to be fulfilled. The abandonment of the church did, however, lead to serious vandalism which occasioned a great deal of public unease. Eventually the diocese decided to cut its losses and the church was demolished in 1953.

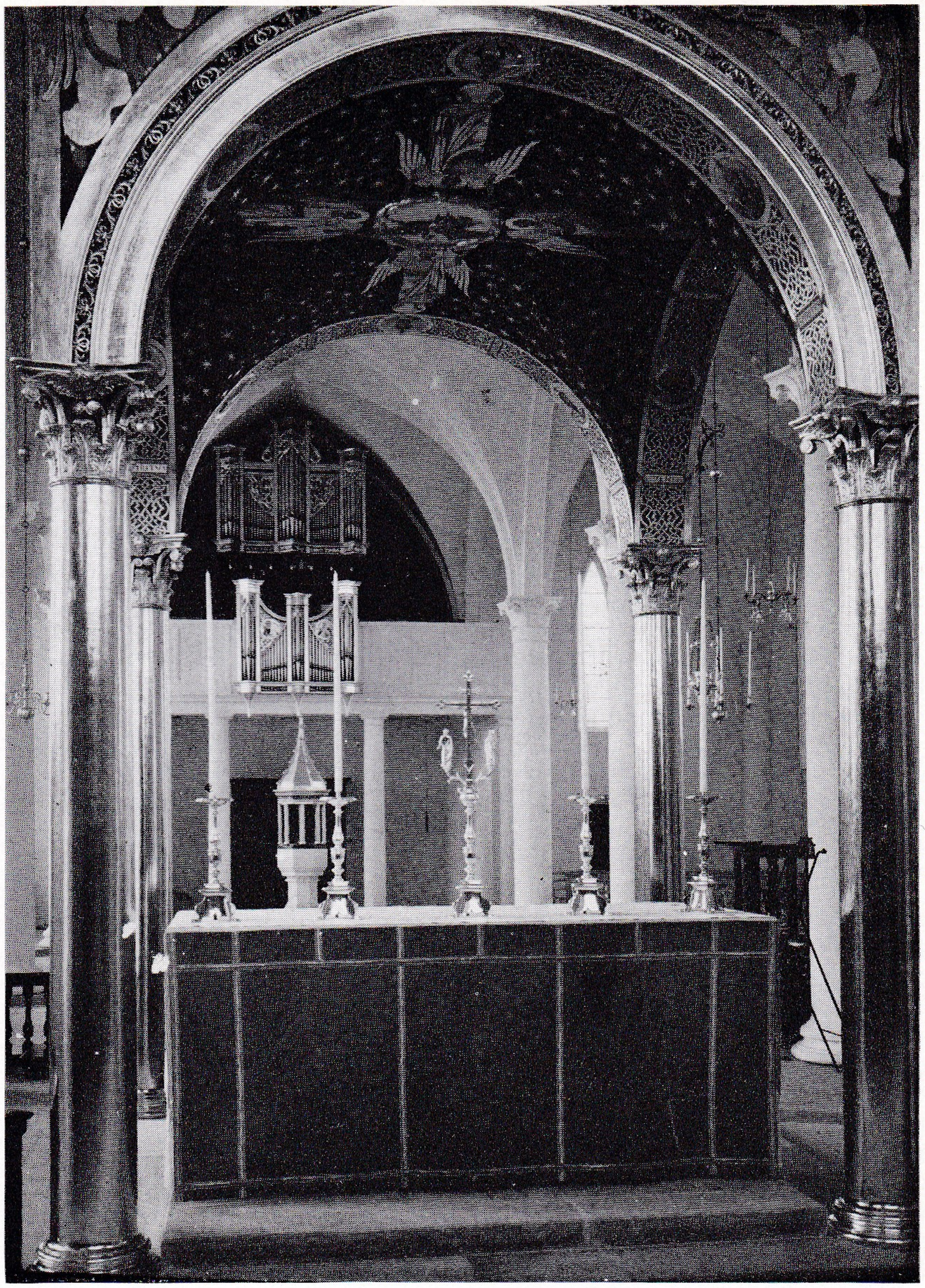
At Wymering, Babbage continued and developed the Anglo-Catholic tradition begun by Nugée and followed by Smith. A major restoration of the building was undertaken and perpetual reservation of the sacrament, in a tabernacle on the high altar, was introduced. The Nugée service pattern continued except that all Communion Services were now officially described as 'masses'. Babbage had the loyal support of his congregation; the second meeting of the new parochial church council, on 15 June 1920, resolved that 'no direct powers should be conferred on Parochial

The interior of St. Philip's Church, Cosham, looking west from behind the high altar. From an original in Portsmouth City Record Office taken by the son of the architect at the time of its consecration.

Church Councils in matters of doctrine, worship and ceremonial, but only such as are in accordance with the practice of the Catholic church'.[52] In such areas it was the duty of the parish priest to lead and of his laity to follow, though some degree of consultation might be appropriate. The increase in the population of Cosham after 1920, however, led to some newcomers to the parish finding the services they were offered not entirely to their taste; the division of the diocese of Winchester in 1927 offered them the hope that a less remote bishop might be prepared to act in the matter, but on this score they were disappointed. Mrs. Alice Hunt was one of those who wrote to the new Bishop of Portsmouth, on 16 March 1928, complaining about the use of incense and the frequent genuflections. In his reply of 19 March the Bishop sympathised: 'of course I fully realise how you feel, for I prefer things simpler myself, but, the Vicar and Church Council of Wymering do not appear to feel like that, and there is nothing in our present Prayer Book to forbid the more ornate service'.[53] Episcopal attitudes had changed dramatically since the 1860s and 1870s.

In fact the new diocesan authorities were very concerned about the church at Cosham. What they wanted was a new church on a central site, but they did not consider that Babbage was the right man to run it. The only solution was to divide the parish, the population of which had risen to about 15,000 by the 1930s. This was difficult as the building of a daughter church at Cosham, along similar lines to Farlington's daughter church at Drayton, had long been the policy of the vicars of Wymering, though the object had not been pursued with much vigour. Asked for an opinion by the Bishop, the chancellor of the diocese advised that it would be impossible to create a conventional district, the normal first step leading to the eventual creation of an independent parish, without the consent of the incumbent.[54] There followed a correspondence between the Bishop and the then patron of Wymering, Mrs. Edith Nugée, about the need to divide the parish. In the Bishop's view [55] the main problem was the rapid growth of Cosham. When Babbage had come to Wymering in 1912 it was still a rural parish, and he was not, in his opinion, capable of running an urban parish. The solution would clearly be to form a conventional district over which Babbage would have no control, leaving him with the still rural western part of the parish. There would be no difficulty in raising funds for a new church in Cosham if Babbage remained at Wymering as he was extremely unpopular. Mrs. Nugée replied that she had reservations about the division of the parish: 'you would, I feel certain, agree with me that it would be a great mistake to create any division or rivalry in the parish by bringing into one corner of it a Priest with either Low-Church views or Modernist tendencies. My husband's family was closely connected with the Tractarian movement and the tradition of this parish for the past 80 years or more has been to develop along the lines of the Oxford Movement. Both I and my family are anxious to ensure that this shall be continued'.[56] The Bishop assured her that he had no objection to Babbage's churchmanship, merely to his incompetence.[57]

Almost a year later, Mrs. Nugée wrote again to the Bishop: 'I hear that the congregations are going down and that no work is being done in the parish. I know that Mr. Babbage has been ill since last October, and not able to do much, if any work, and that he is still ill. Is it not possible for you to insist on his resignation?'[58] The Bishop urged her to write tactfully to Babbage making the same suggestion. He also informed her that they had recently acquired an alternative church site on the Highbury estate; 'this has had the effect of stirring Mr. Babbage and his little clientèle to further efforts about the church for which he secured a site [in Cosham] many years ago . . . , but it would make an enormous difference to the whole position if a young and capable Rector could take Mr. Babbage's place, and on the spot lead the whole enterprise'.[59] Within a few days he was able to inform her that any financial difficulties for a new church had been solved; Lady Harrison of Le Court, Liss, had offered to give the diocese £25,000 for a church in Cosham.[60] The Bishop's news was not welcomed by Babbage. Writing to the Bishop on 15 July 1935, he informed him that his Parochial Church Council had decided not to offer their site in the centre of Cosham to the diocese, but that he would be prepared to consider the creation of a separate parish south of the railway and to the east of the Portsmouth road. He felt bound to point out, however, 'that building in an easterly direction from the Highbury estate is not promising and may not be proceeded with . . . . In a few years at most, probably the present personnel [at Wymering] will have changed whereas a church building on an unsuitable site will remain'.[61] Faced with Babbage's opposition, however, the Bishop had little choice and building began on the Highbury site. The architect chosen was Sir Ninian Comper, recommended by Lady Harrison on 29 May 1935.[62] The new church, vicarage and church hall cost £25,390 and the church was consecrated on 2 October 1937. In the notes he prepared for the consecration, Comper described the church as 'not a copy of anything else new or old, but it derives from its designer's former



works and, simple as is its result, it owes everything to tradition, from the earliest Christian onwards and from the Eastern shores of the Mediterrean to England. Its single aim is beauty and that incentive to prayer which comes from beauty, and its result can be judged by the eye alone'.[63] Comper designed everything in the church: the superb organ case, the ciborium over the high altar, the altar frontals and ornaments. Mrs. Nugée would have liked the patronage of the new church to have been given to her family, but was persuaded by the Bishop that a suitable appointment would be made by him, and the presence of such a distinguished Anglo-Catholic as Sir Ninian Comper as the church's architect must have given her confidence that such would be the case. Her son, the sub-warden of Radley College, wrote to the Bishop on 24 March 1936: 'I really knew that the patronage of the new church would not be given to the family. After all, why should it be?'[64] What he did not know was that two weeks earlier the living had been offered to and accepted by an exceptionally moderate curate at Portsmouth Cathedral; the aumbry for the reservation of the sacrament, so neatly hidden by Comper in the hollow pillar of the ciborium, was not to be used for another thirty years.

The creation of the new parish of Cosham only reduced the population of the united parishes of Widley and Wymering by about a third; with the development of corporation housing at Paulsgrove the population of the parishes continued to rise. This time Babbage, soon to retire, did not oppose the further division of his parish. The conventional district of Paulsgrove was

formed in 1947, a separate parish created in 1954, and the new church finally consecrated in 1957. Two epitaphs should be permitted on Babbage's work at Wymering. In a letter to the Bishop on 16 July 1934, Babbage's parish worker, Sister Matilda, wrote: 'I feel it is right that you should know . . . of the very strong feeling which has been aroused in the Parish, by the knowledge that the work which our Vicar has been doing . . . appears to be so little appreciated. I have been working as a Deaconess for upwards of 40 years in different parts of England, but I have never worked under a more devoted and enthusiastic Parish Priest'.[65] Three years later on 1 June 1937, the Archdeacon of Portsmouth informed his bishop: 'the Vicar of Wymering told me it was only known to a very few persons that he is suffering from Diabetes. He is not on Insulin. They suspect Acidosis'.[66]

The liturgical disputes that divided the ancient parishes of Farlington, Widley and Wymering in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries may seem petty today in an ecumenical age. They were not so viewed at the time, and there were many other Anglican parishes throughout England that suffered similar disputes, often for very similar reasons. Those considered in this paper have the good fortune of being exceptionally well documented in both local and national sources. Their lasting memorial is the new churches that were built during them, and in some cases actually resulting from them: Purbrook, Wymering and Farlington, all delightful Tractarian period pieces by fine architects; the strict Evangelical-Romanesque of Christ Church, Portsdown; and the truly inspiring St. Philip's, Cosham, promoted by division but built, at least by the architect, 'ad majorem Dei gloriam'.

APPENDIX

Text of the Memorial to the Lord Bishop of Winchester from Sir Lucius Curtis and others, 1867:

We, the undersigned, inhabitants of Widley and Wymering, parishes in your Lordship's diocese, humbly implore your lordship to lend an attentive ear to the heartfelt cry of our distress. We, from our childhood, with our countrymen generally, have been accustomed to the scriptural and spiritual worship of God in our parish churches: but of late years all this has been changed. We now feel most painfully that our churches have been turned into *mass* houses; and our touchingly simple services exchanged for some things which appear to us a masquerade, if they be not indeed the services of the Roman Catholic Communion, which we have been taught to dread and to deprecate. The desire for peace among ourselves, and the utmost confidence in the paternal care of your Lordship, have hitherto restrained us from making our trouble known in this matter; but the evil increases, and our homes, and our hearts, and our consciences will no longer permit us to remain silent.

In connection with our own parish church at Wymering there has long been something very like conventual life, and now a Priory is added called 'St. Augustin's,' and from these places are continually issuing forth phantoms, until lately only read of or seen in Roman Catholic countries. Thus our rural population is made accustomed, by the daily processions and perpetual appearance of these 'sisters' and 'brothers,' to Romish institutions in connection with our English Protestant religion; and our light and healthful highways are darkened, and to our English sense rendered loathsome and terrible by these associations of the Inquisition. Then in our churches there are processions of choristers, priests, and acolytes; there are chantings and banners and garlands; there are smoking incense, and candles burning at noon-day, and brazen crosses lifted high upon the Communion table, and embroidered crosses covering the vestments of the officiating clergy. The parishioners are thus driven from the churches where they wish to worship God, who is a spirit, in spirit and in truth; and if these churches are now filled, they are filled by persons from distant parts who congregate to witness strange histrionic performances.

Necessity then compels your memorialists to charge their vicar with introducing practices foreign to the usages of their Reformed Protestant English Church, and they respectfully ask your Lordship's attention to the details of the morning service in Wymering Church on Easter Sunday last:-

The church was lighted by numerous candles supported by candelabra. These candelabra were tastefully decorated with flowers. Flowers and plants were also placed in other parts of the church; the chancel was profusely decorated. The congregation sat in silence for about fifteen minutes; then singing was heard without, becoming more distinct until the door on the south-west was reached. Then the congregation rose *en masse*, and a procession entered. First came a person dressed in white bearing a brass cross, suspended on a pole, painted in various colours. He was followed by two acolytes in scarlet and white, one of whom bore a brass implement like a mason's trowel, and the other a censer which he swung to and fro, filling the church

with the smoke and fumes of the incense. About twenty choristers chanting 'Jesus Christ is risen to-day' were preceded and followed by men bearing elaborate banners. The Reverend George Nugée, the vicar of Wymering, with book in hand, closed the procession. He had on a black robe reaching to his feet. This robe was covered by a white surplice reaching to within five or six inches of the ground, and he wore on his head a peculiarly shaped hat, which we are told is called a BIRETTA. The procession moved up the church in very slow order; the banners were placed on each side of the chancel, and the choristers took their seats, after which the service began. The psalms and responses were chanted by the choir, and some of the prayers were omitted. Before the Communion service a number of candles in the chancel were lighted in addition to those already mentioned as burning. The vicar retired, and again appeared, now wearing a white satin cape, which had a large cross both before and behind: he also wore a CHASUBLE, and something like a bib of violet colour, which we understand is called an ALB. The two acolytes now walked up to the Communion table, and the incense having been lighted, the censer was handed to the vicar, who waved it about the Communion table. He also took the bread and wine and held them out once or twice toward the table, and then bowed. All this time the choristers were chanting 'Christ our Passover'. After the Communion service Mr. Nugée preached from St. John ii. 19 and 21 – 'Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up; but he spake of the temple of his body'. The object and the aim of this sermon was to enforce the doctrine of real presence in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. After the sermon Mr. Nugée returned to the table, the choristers again chanting. When this ceased seven or eight 'Sisters of Mercy' went up and kneeled and the Sacrament was administered.

We, the undersigned, live in the midst of these practices, and we feel that they are intended to remove all the landmarks of our Christian Protestantism, and to substitute for them doctrines which our forefathers resisted unto death. Especially do we see and feel that these practices are so openly carried out that the peoples may have no doubt that in these churches they have a SACRIFICING PRIESTHOOD. But this, we know, our Protestant Church strongly condemns in her Articles and elsewhere. We therefore earnestly implore your lordship to use your authority to remove these practices of which we complain, and restore to us the use of our churches, and the service to which we are so heartily attached. And most ardently do we pray that the Eternal God may be with you in the discharge of your onerous and responsible duties; and that He will give you grace and courage to maintain in all the churches of your vast diocese, the true doctrine and the pure worship of our Reformed Communion against all attempts to corrupt them. And thus will your memorialists ever pray.

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This paper is meant to be a detailed local contribution to the general history of the Church of England in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and particularly those aspects concerned with the parochial impact of the Oxford Movement. The detailed sources for the paper are listed in the accompanying footnotes. Readers who would like to know more about the general history of the Church of England at this time are referred in the first place to W. O. Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, 2 vols, London 1966–70. The following books are also useful: E. R. Norman, *Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England*, London 1968, and *Church and Society in England, 1770–1970*, London 1976; P. T. Marsh, *The Victorian Church in Decline*, London 1969 (good on ritualism); and D. Bowen, *The Idea of the Victorian Church*, Montreal 1968.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the Revd. John Pilkington, rector of Farlington, and to Mr. D. A. Armstrong, records officer to the Church Commissioners, for access to records in their custody. I am also grateful to the staffs of the Public Record Office and the Clwyd County Record Office who provided photocopies of documents for my use, and to the staff of Portsmouth Central Library for providing many of the supplementary sources for this paper. My wife and the Revd. W. M. Jacob have both read and commented on the draft, but they must be absolved from any complicity in the imperfections that remain. My staff at the City Record Office have coped marvellously with the greater than customary vagueness of the author during the period of the paper's composition, and none more so than Rosemary Phillips, who typed the fair copy from an abominable manuscript. Finally I must thank the art editor and technical adviser to the series for his considerable assistance in selecting the illustrations.

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